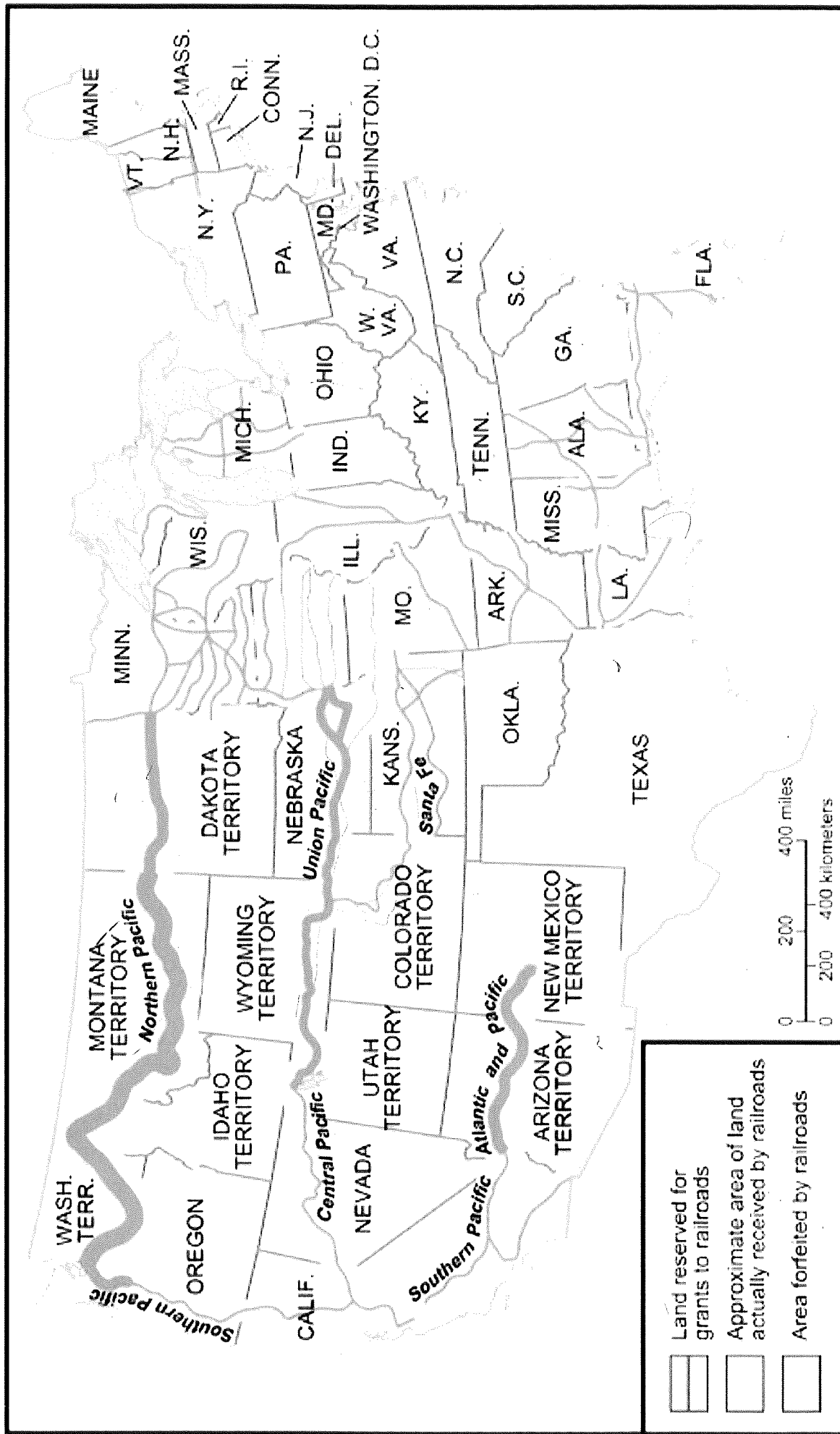


LEARNING STATION #2

RAILROADS



FEDERAL LAND GRANTS TO RAILROADS AS OF 1871

Pacific Railway Act

July 1, 1862: Congress authorizes the construction of a transcontinental railroad with federal land grants under the first Pacific Railway Act. The Union Pacific will build westward from Omaha, the Central Pacific eastward from Sacramento. In addition, the legislation grants the railroads 10 sections of public domain lands on both sides of the railway. Two years later, the second Pacific Railway Act doubles the size of federal land grants.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/streamliners/timeline/>

Excerpts from the Pacific Railway Act:

CHAP. CXX. — *An Act to aid in the Construction of a Railroad and Telegraph Line from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean, and to secure to the Government the Use of the same for Postal, Military, and Other Purposes.*

SEC. 2. And he it further enacted, That the right of way through the public lands be, and the same is hereby, granted to said company for the construction of said railroad and telegraph line; and the right, power, and authority is hereby given to said company to take from the public lands adjacent to the line of said road, earth, stone, timber, and other materials for the construction thereof; said right of way is granted to said railroad to the extent of two hundred feet in width on each side of said railroad where it may pass over the public lands, including all necessary grounds for stations, buildings, workshops, and depots, machine shops, switches, side tracks, turntables, and, water stations. The United States shall extinguish as rapidly as may be the Indian titles to all lands falling under the operation of this act and required for the said right of way and; grants hereinafter made.

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